



NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Policy Manual

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Purpose:

This issuance establishes policy and procedure related to safety procedures, accident protocols, and equipment for school vehicles operated by the DCF OOE.

Authority:

- N.J.S.A. 18A:39-1 et seq.
- N.J.S.A. 39:3B-10
- N.J.S.A. 39:3B-11
- NJAC 6A:27-1 et seq.

Policy:

- A. During the provision of transportation services on a DCF OOE school vehicle, the safety and supervision of the students and other passengers are paramount to the shared responsibility of the School Vehicle Driver and Escort.
- B. DCF Regional School personnel shall establish and consistently implement rules of conduct pertaining to student behavior on school vehicles.
- C. Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 39:3B-10 and 11, at all times while the school vehicle is in operation, the driver and each passenger shall wear a properly adjusted and fastened seat belt or other child safety restraint system that is in conformity with the applicable Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards and this policy.

Procedures:

1. Cell Phones

1. The Regional Transportation Coordinator shall provide the Head Bus Driver or designee of each RS with an adequate supply of cell phones to be used for emergency situations and to contact the RS:
 - a. Initially, the Head Bus Driver or designee shall sign for the receipt of the assigned phones; and
 - b. The Head Bus Driver or designee shall secure the cell phones in a locked cabinet or desk when the phones are not in use.
2. The Head Bus Driver or designee shall assign a cell phone to each Driver at the start of the workday.
3. Each Driver shall be responsible for the security and appropriate care of the assigned cell phone:
 - a. Each Driver shall ensure that the cell phone is turned on and operational during the pre-trip inspection;
 - b. Problems with the cell phone detected prior to the start of a school run shall be reported immediately to the Head Bus Driver. A replacement cell phone shall be provided for that trip; and
 - c. Cell phone problems encountered during the run shall be reported to the Head Bus Driver or designee upon the Driver's return to the RS.
4. The Head Bus Driver, bus driver, or designee shall immediately report any cell phone problems to their designated Regional Transportation Coordinator.
5. Drivers shall report lost or stolen cell phones to the Head Bus Driver, ES, or designee immediately.
6. Each Driver is responsible for the cell phone during the shift when the cell phone is signed out.
7. The Head Bus Driver, ES, or designee shall immediately notify the Regional Transportation Coordinator who shall terminate services for the lost or stolen phone:
 - a. If a Driver loses or damages a State of New Jersey issued cell phone, they are responsible for payment to the State for replacement of that damaged or lost phone;
 - b. The Head Bus Driver, ES, or designee shall take corrective or disciplinary action, as appropriate when a cell phone is being used for personal or unauthorized use of any kind;
 - c. The Head Bus Driver, ES, or designee may take corrective and disciplinary action, as appropriate; and
 - d. The fee for replacing a lost State issued cell phone shall be paid by the staff who lost the phone, not the Department. This is per Management and Utilization of DCF-issued [DCF-III-E-1-022.2008](#), **Wireless Devices and Cell Phone Usage policy**.
8. The cell phone shall be turned on during a run to ensure incoming communication from the RS; however, it is unlawful for the driver of a school vehicle to use a cellular or wireless telephone while operating the vehicle. Only the Driver or Escort shall use the cell phone:

- a. When the school vehicle is parked in a safe area off a highway; or
- b. In an emergency.
- 9. The cell phone shall not be used:
 - a. To call parent(s), guardian(s), caregiver(s), or student(s) when the vehicle arrives at a house or a stop to pick-up or drop-off a student, unless the ES, with the approval of the OOE Manager of Operations or OOE Director, Deputy Director, or their designee has granted special permission in certain rare situations; and
 - b. For any personal business.

2. E-Z Pass Transponders

- a. The OOE Vehicle Coordinator shall provide each assigned RS an E-Z Pass transponder. The Head Bus Driver or designee shall:
 - 1. Be responsible for the security of the E-Z Pass transponders assigned to the RS; and
 - 2. Maintain records of all EZ Pass transponders and the vehicles to which they are assigned.
- b. The Head Bus Driver or designee shall install E-Z Pass transponders on the assigned school vehicles that regularly use toll roads to transport students to and from school and school activities:
 - 1. The E-Z Pass transponder shall be used only on the vehicle to which it is assigned by license and registration; and
 - 2. The E-Z Pass transponder shall not be transferred to any other vehicle or used for personal purposes.
- c. The Driver shall document the daily use of the E-Z Pass transponder on the [OOE-Policy-37-A-ATT7](#), **E-Z Pass Report** and shall submit the report to the Head Bus Driver or designee at the end of each month. The Head Bus Driver or designee shall:
 - 1. Review each submitted E-Z Pass Report to verify the consistency with the regular route of the assigned school vehicle or the use of the vehicle to transport students to and from school related activities; and
 - 2. Forward the E-Z Pass Report to the OOE Regional Transportation Coordinator for reconciliation and payment of charges at the end of each month.
- d. When it is suspected that there is a violation related to the use of the E-Z Pass, the Head Bus Driver or designee shall investigate in conjunction with the ES.
- e. The Driver shall immediately notify the Head Bus Driver or designee and the ES if an E-Z Pass is lost or stolen:
 - 1. The ES shall immediately notify the OOE Vehicle Coordinator; and
 - 2. The ES, Head Bus Driver, or designee may take corrective and disciplinary action, as appropriate.
- f. In the event a school vehicle is towed, the Driver shall remove the E-Z Pass from the school vehicle.

3. Accident and Incident Procedures

- 1. In the event of an accident or incident:

- a. The Driver shall dial 9-1-1 on the vehicle cell phone or school telephone, as appropriate, to contact the police for any accident or serious incident such as vandalism, stolen vehicle, or school vehicle evacuation; If injury is evident or suspected, the Driver shall request medical attention through the police for the injured occupant(s) of the vehicle;
 - b. The Driver, if able, shall call the Head Bus Driver, ES, or designee to notify them of the location and the extent of the accident or incident; and
 - c. If the Driver is incapacitated, the escort or a trained student, as appropriate, shall make the cell phone calls to the police and the RS as described in 1a and b above.
2. If possible, injured passengers shall not be left unsupervised and shall be transported to the hospital by ambulance.
3. The emergency personnel responding to the 9-1-1- call will manage the accident scene which includes identifying those passengers that must be transported to the hospital and to which hospital(s).
4. The Escort or Driver shall assure that each student, infant, and toddler transported to the hospital has current Emergency Information Forms [OOE-Policy-36-ATT2](#), **Student/Infant Contact Information Form** on their person. The escort and Driver shall stay with the remaining students at the accident or incident site.
5. The [OOE-Policy-37-C-ATT17C](#), **Staff Emergency Information Form** shall be provided to the school nurse, and confidentiality of all information therein shall be strictly maintained;
6. Notifications regarding accidents and incidents shall occur in the following manner:
 - a. The Head Bus Driver or designee shall notify the ES or designee and the OOE Regional Transportation Coordinator about every accident and incident;
 - b. The OOE Regional Transportation Coordinator shall notify the Manager of Operations by e-mail about the occurrence of every accident and serious incident who shall in turn notify the OOE Director;
 - c. The ES shall notify the school nurse, as appropriate;
 - d. The ES or school nurse shall notify the parent(s), guardian(s) and caregiver(s) of the students who were on the school vehicle:
 1. About the accident or incident;
 2. About any transportation delays due to the accident or incident; and
 3. If their child is injured, they shall direct them to proceed immediately to the hospital.
 - e. The ES or OOE Manager of Operations shall notify:
 1. The Director, OOE in the event there has been death, injury, or severe property damage; and
 2. The OOE Personnel Unit in the event of staff injury or death.
7. If the vehicle is safe to drive and there are students on the vehicle, the Driver shall call the Head Bus Driver or designee to receive instructions about how to proceed about transporting the students to their destination.

8. When a school vehicle is rendered inoperable due to an accident, serious incident, mechanical failure, or other reasons:
 - a. The Driver shall notify the Head Bus Driver;
 - b. The Head Bus Driver or designee shall immediately dispatch another school vehicle to pick up the students and staff then complete the run; and
 - c. The vehicle shall be towed by an authorized vendor.
10. The Head Bus Driver or designee shall be responsible for maintaining a list of State approved towing and storage vendors. The Head Bus Driver or designee shall notify the vendor of the need and location of the service required.
11. The Head Bus Driver or designee shall notify the NJMVC School Bus Inspection Unit within 72 hours if the vehicle was towed due to collision damage. This is to ensure the vehicle will be inspected prior to its return to service.
12. Within the same day of an accident or incident, the Driver of the vehicle involved in the accident or incident shall:
 - a. Complete the [State of NJ Vehicle Accident Report](#) when there is a moving vehicle accident, road debris damage (rocks, branches, bicycle, etc.), when a vehicle is parked and struck by another vehicle, or contact is made with any animal or pedestrian;
 - b. Complete the [New Jersey Vehicle Incident Form](#) when a school vehicle is vandalized or stolen, when glass on a vehicle is broken, or when there are other damages such as dings, dents, or scratches of unknown origin;
 - c. Complete the [OOE-Policy-37-A-ATT9](#), **Student Transportation Incident Report** if students were on the vehicle;
NOTE: The Student Transportation Incident Report is a confidential, internal document that should not be disclosed or released to any persons other than the designated school and OOE staff;
 - d. Request and obtain a copy of the report from the police department that responded to the accident scene; and
 - e. Submit all completed forms to the Head Bus Driver;
NOTE: If the Driver's injuries are such that they are unable to attend to these responsibilities, the Head Bus Driver or designee shall issue the above reports within 24 hours.
12. On the same day of an accident or incident, the Head Bus Driver or designee shall submit the completed Student Transportation Incident Report to the ES who shall electronically file the accident or incident on the Unusual Incident Reporting and Management System.
13. If physical injury occurs to a staff person on the school vehicle, that employee shall complete the Employers First Report of Accidental Injury or Occupational Disease. If the injured person is unable to complete this task, their supervisor shall assume that responsibility.
14. Within 24 hours of the occurrence of a vehicle accident or incident, the Head Bus Driver or designee shall:
 - a. Forward either or both the original blue New Jersey Accident Report and the green New Jersey Vehicle Incident Form and a copy of the OOE-

[Policy-37-A-ATT9](#), **Student Transportation Incident Report** to the OOE Regional Transportation Coordinator; and

- b. Scan, email, or fax copies of all required reporting forms to the OOE Regional Transportation Coordinator as individually completed and then mail the entire packet of forms, as soon as assembled, to the OOE Regional Transportation Coordinator. Copies shall be maintained on file by the Head Bus Driver or designee at the RS.
15. When the police report is received by the Head Bus Driver, they shall send copies to the OOE Regional Transportation Coordinator.
16. The OOE Regional Transportation Coordinator shall forward the original [New Jersey Accident Report](#), [Vehicle Incident Form](#), and the police report to the Central Motor Pool, keeping a copy of each report for their file.
17. When there is body damage to the school vehicle requiring repair, the Head Bus Driver or designee shall obtain three (3) estimates and send them to the OOE Regional Transportation Coordinator and the OOE Manager of Operations:
 - a. The OOE Regional Transportation Coordinator shall provide the Head Bus Driver or designee with the necessary information to decide where to have the vehicle repaired.

4. School Vehicle Evacuation Drills

1. Reasons for vehicle evacuations shall include, but not be limited to:
 - a. Fire or danger of fire:
 1. A school vehicle shall be stopped and evacuated immediately if the engine or any portion of the vehicle is on fire or smoking. Passengers shall be moved at least 100 feet from the vehicle and remain there until the Driver has been informed by the police or fire authorities that no danger remains or until other provisions are made;
 2. A school vehicle shall be evacuated immediately if it is near an existing fire and unable to be moved away from the fire, or if the vehicle is near the presence of gasoline or other combustible materials and is unable to be relocated. The Driver and escort shall move the passengers at least 100 feet from the area of the vehicle, fire, and combustible materials until the Driver has been informed by the police or fire authorities that no danger remains, or until other provisions are made; and
 - b. Unsafe situation: In the event a school vehicle is stopped due to an accident, mechanical failure, road conditions or human failure, the Driver shall determine immediately whether it is safer for the students to remain in the vehicle or be evacuated.
2. School vehicle evacuation training drills shall be conducted on RS property in accordance with this policy. They shall be under the supervision of the ES and Head Bus Driver or designee at least twice annually to ensure safe and efficient evacuations in case of emergency.
3. School vehicle evacuation training drills shall:
 - a. Demonstrate and practice various methods and components of evacuation that are the safest and most efficient;

- b. Include the participation of education staff, Drivers, Escorts, and students in appropriate portions of the drills;
 - c. Be conducted when the weather is conducive to safety and preferably when the vehicle arrives at the RS with the students on board; and
 - d. Be documented on the [OOE-Policy-37-E-ATT13](#) **School Vehicle Emergency Evacuation Drill Report**.
4. Records of the evacuation training shall be maintained at the RS for a minimum of three years.

5. Procedures and Safety Factors for School Trips

1. Non-routine, special field trips, as defined in section C of the Consent Form Guidelines for DCF Regional Schools, shall be processed as follows:
 - a. [OOE-Policy-37-E-ATT15](#), **Trip Request Form** shall be submitted to the OOE Manager of Operations, Deputy Director, or designee by the ES at least two (2) weeks prior to the planned trip;
 - b. The Manager of Operations, Deputy Director, or designee shall approve or decline the trip;
 - c. Once approved, the Parental Consent for Special Field Trips form for all students shall be kept in a central file in the main office at school; and
 - d. Only students with signed permission slips will be permitted to attend the trip and students shall not be excluded from school if permission is not granted by their parent, guardian, or approved designee.
2. For special, and all other field trips, the ES shall be responsible for maintaining the following conditions:
 - a. A safe staff to student ratio shall be maintained while students are out of the building (staff shall be assigned specific students);
 - b. Obtaining signed permission slips for all students attending the trip prior to the trip;
 - c. Obtaining a completed and approved [OOE-Policy-37-E-ATT15](#), **Trip Request Form** at least two (2) weeks prior to the trip;
 - d. Ensure all medical concerns are addressed; and
 - e. Establish a safety plan and procedure in case of emergency, inclement weather, or other unexpected issues.

Forms and Attachments:

- [OOE-Policy-36-ATT2](#), **Student/Infant Contact Information Form**
- [OOE-Policy-37-E-ATT7](#), **E-Z Pass Report**
- [OOE-Policy-37-E-ATT9](#), **Student Transportation Incident Report**
- [OOE-Policy-37-E-ATT13](#), **School Vehicle Emergency Evacuation Drill Report**
- [OOE-Policy-37-E-ATT15](#), **Trip Request Form**
- [OOE-Policy-37-C-ATT17C](#), **Staff Emergency Information Form**
- [OOE-Policy-37-E-ATT19](#), **Special Field Trip Permission Form**
- [State of NJ Vehicle Accident Report](#)
- [State of NJ Vehicle Incident Form](#)

Related Information:

- [Consent Form Guidelines](#)

Policy History:

- Revised 9/8/2020
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- New 1/6/1997